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ABSTRACT

As a result of a conference dealing with truancy, problems of non-attendance, and violent and disruptive behavior at school, a small scale survey was conducted of 18 urban schools in England to examine these problems and to report on practices and procedures which the schools had found helpful in coping with them. It emerged during the survey that there is unlikely to be one single solution, or set of solutions, to behavioral problems and that each school has to construct its own approach in the light of local circumstances. Various problems and individual approaches to these problems are discussed, as is school organization, communication with parents, and staff utilization. It is suggested that any attack on behavioral problems in the schools be concerned with the following: the quality of the teaching; the curriculum; school organization and management; and discipline. (Author/RLV)

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Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools

Truancy and behavioural problems in some urban schools

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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"If children are to develop self-confidence they must first have confidence in the adults around them. The building of good relationships is based on mutual trust, and this takes time. Increasingly we have found that teachers cannot expect respect as of right; they have to earn it. If children are to learn respect for others they must themselves be treated with courtesy and respect."

From a paper written by the head of one of the schools visited

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1 Introduction

This survey arose from a conference convened in June 1976 by the then Secretary of State for Education and Science who, in consultation with representatives of the local authority and teacher associations and other interested bodies undertook to arrange for information to be collected and disseminated about helpful practice in dealing with truancy, problems of non-attendance and violent and disruptive behaviour at school.

HMI were asked, therefore, to examine some of the problems discussed at the conference as these presented themselves in a number of secondary schools and to produce a short account of practice and procedures which those schools found helpful in coping with them. It was thought that a small scale enquiry carried out fairly rapidly and yielding necessarily tentative results was likely to be more immediately helpful to schools and LEAs than a more elaborate survey which might take several years to complete.

Not unexpectedly, it emerged during the survey that there is unlikely to be a single solution, or set of solutions, to behavioural problems, and that each school has to construct its own approach in the light of local circumstances. These circumstances include, for example, the economic and social characteristics of the catchment area, the type and nature of the school (which will have been influenced by its history and traditions), and the teaching and other resources available.

The report cannot, therefore, offer a panacea. Instead it raises questions which need to be discussed at local level if progress is to be made.

How the survey was carried out

It was decided to limit the initial exercise to a small number of urban secondary schools suggested by their local education authorities because they appeared to be achieving greater success in dealing with these problems than might have been expected from their situation and the conditions under which they worked.

A team of nine HMI was set up. Working in pairs, they visited 18 schools in London, the Midlands, and the North of England, each for four days. They sought to identify the elements in these urban schools which appeared to meet their pupils' needs most effectively. This involved meeting both teachers and their pupils, often on an individual basis, making detailed enquiries into the pastoral and curricular organisation of the school, and observing teaching. Where possible, contacts were made with members of the education welfare service, the social services, and the school psychological service, and, less frequently, with school nurses and with police.

Since many of the schools were large and complex, there was much that went unexamined. Not much of the material was quantifiable though some rough estimates in percentage terms were made, largely based on numerical facts supplied by heads and their staffs.

The schools

Of the 18 authorities approached, 17 nominated schools. From the resulting list 18 were chosen, the additional one arising from the choice of a pair of single-sex schools. All were comprehensive though in some of them reorganisation was not yet complete and selective elements still remained. Only one or two showed signs of difficulty in the process of incorporating pupils of ability ranges unfamiliar to the majority of staff.

They ranged in size from 582 to 2,138 pupils: six had between 500 and 1,000 pupils, six between 1,000 and 1,500 and six exceeded 1,500. Only one had more than 2,000 pupils. Seven of the schools were on split sites. The oldest buildings in use dated back to the 1902 Act, but some were very modern and three were purpose-built comprehensive schools. The schools varied in the age range for which they catered: three were 11-16, eleven 11-18, two 13-18 and two 14-18.* Several were listed as social priority schools, although these were not necessarily those with the greatest problems, since criteria for this classification vary widely from one autho-

*Throughout this document the years of secondary schooling are assumed to start at 11 despite the age at which pupils actually enter the schools, eg a 13–18 school would begin with year 3.

rity to another. Two were designated by their authorities as community schools or colleges, and a number of others were mounting activities associated with the community.

A number of the schools visited had a multi-racial population. In one, only 30 per cent of pupils were indigenous, 25 per cent being of Asian origin and the remaining 45 per cent from other European countries or of Caribbean or African extraction. In another, there were almost equal numbers of English, Asian and West Indian children. Other schools contained mainly one ethnic minority group; in one school the 60 non-indigenous pupils were Chinese. On the other hand, of the 18 schools in the survey, eight reported under 8 per cent of pupils belonging to ethnic minority groups and three of the schools had hardly any pupils of non-English origin.

This paper describes the schools and their settings as they were in the first six months of 1977. Inevitably there have been changes since. In one or two instances subsequent developments are indicated: for the rest, the schools are described as they were when the visits were made.

2 The problems

Area problems

Most of the schools were in inner city areas and drew their pupils from crowded and run-down property or from new flats and houses built to rehouse families on old sites. Teachers in some areas spoke of the problems of high-rise flats and redevelopment estates, the conditions in both being made worse by vandalism. Some schools drew from overspill areas or sections of new towns to which some of the problems associated with city centres had been exported and new problems added. Others served long-established manufacturing areas, with relatively homogeneous populations; few of their pupils came from the more favoured social groups but very deprived pupils did not appear to present a substantial problem. Even where the catchment area of the school included a suburban population mainly housed in council estates and not suffering severely from social problems, teachers felt that many pupils shared the low motivation and aspirations more frequently attributed to many of the inner city pupils.

Neighbourhood problems

Neighbourhoods, even in large cities, are often small and may be introverted. In one school teachers claimed that it was possible to predict the behaviour patterns of pupils from the road in which they lived. In a small industrial town the local main road on the boundary was described as 'a solid wall across which few will pass'. The implication was that within such boundaries people had created their own security which they were reluctant to shed, some fearing the departure of their young people, even to a neighbouring town close by.

Although such close bonds have an innate strength they have their weaknesses; the teachers in many schools spoke of the pupils' resistance to new experience and of apathy which undermined the potential for improvement. The head of a school in a housing estate where 10 per cent of the property had been vandalised to such an extent that it was unusable, wrote, 'We have little success . . . in persuading the sane majority to

play an active part in discouraging disorder'. He added that this was a problem of the wider community rather than for the school alone.

Family problems

Problems common in all areas were those thought to be associated with the increasing number of single-parent and separated families, with children 'in care' or living with step-parents, and with households split by the exigencies of shift work. Some schools reported the problems of children from very large families, and from feuding families. Inconsistent child-rearing patterns, over-indulgence or excessive strictness were also described as sources of trouble.

Parental anxieties can weigh heavily on the children. Attention was frequently drawn to the problems that parental unemployment can cause for children, in whatever area they live. In one area in the north of England 14 per cent of the working population were said to be unemployed, by contrast with the then national average of 4 per cent.

Many teachers spoke of the lack of opportunities at home for children to have peace and quiet, uninterrupted play, personal conversation with adults, or books and other intellectual stimuli. In one school the teachers considered that over 50 per cent of the first year pupils (11-12) were in some respects at a developmental stage of nine years or under. Lacking vocabulary and thought-provoking stimuli, such children made very slow progress in school and some were discouraged after seven years in their primary schools to find themselves further behind some of their peers than when they started.

Teachers in some of the schools visited mentioned the problems of some of their children who were unaccustomed to regular domestic routines, and who, possibly because they never knew what to expect next from their parents or other adults, might develop attitudes which led to endless trouble with external authority, including school. For many such children, the ordered life of a well run school could be an immense comfort and support.

Behavioural problems

It is important to keep the incidence of violence among pupils in perspective: only a small proportion of pupils in the schools visited ever behaved violently when they were in school. But all the schools reported some examples of similar types of violence, though to a varying extent: overt violence (fighting, bullying, assault, loud and aggressive behaviour) both individual and in groups, and implicit violence (intimidation and working in 'protection' rackets). Other problems were dumb insolence, swearing, smoking, graffiti, lateness, truancy, and 'forgery' to conceal it.

Not all such behaviour arises from stress but most of the schools visited believed that much of it does. In one school which served a slum clearance area it was estimated that about 10 per cent of the pupils were on the verge of violent outbursts at any time. A teacher said of one pupil, "Sometimes it seems her aim to provoke physical violence—perhaps this is the kind of contact she seeks."

A number of schools observed that most serious behavioural problems arose outside the school, including problems of sexual behaviour, theft, and wilful damage to property, and that it was only through the ripples created when these activities involved the law and social agencies that the school became implicated.

One inner city school reported a substantial amount of bullying of pupils from ethnic minorities, apparently arising from the racial prejudice of a group of boys from one of the most deprived areas that the school served. This was confirmed by some of the boys who had suffered as a result of the bullying.

Absence from school

The attempt to quantify in general terms unexplained absence from school, some of which may be unjustified, is unproductive and can be misleading. An average figure of attendance conceals not only the incidence of good attendance but also the real seriousness of absenteeism. Even to compute one form group's attendance for a week can be misleading, unless it is

expressed for each child in half days and examined against each child's record throughout the term. Quite a number of children take half days off from time to time but escape being labelled as truants. Global totals give no indication either of the number of children involved or of the persistence of their absenteeism.

The definition of truancy is fraught with difficulty. 'Unauthorised absence' is a phrase which does not identify the authority. The school will not sanction absence without good excuse. Some parents may. Absence with parental authorisation is usually then described as 'condoned absence'. It may arise for a number of reasons: illness of the mother, sickness among younger children, the need for an English-speaking daughter or son to shop for the mother, family work patterns (eg shift work and occasional holidays), mother's desire for company, indulgence of the child's wish to stay at home or sheer disorganisation of home life, and occasionally the parents' inability to control their child.

It was beyond the scope of this enquiry to attempt to measure and record the nature and incidence of absence from school in the schools visited, but a few general observations may be made:

a. All the schools reported a recognisable and steady increase in unauthorised absence from the third year onwards.

b. Though there were local variations, there were fewer truants from the extreme ends of the ability range: most were to be found in the lower reaches of the middle bands of the third, fourth and fifth years.

c. Some reports suggested that in some areas truancy in the fifth year presented almost intractable problems. One principal education welfare officer spoke of his difficulties in attempting to deal with this with his existing staff and said it was often a matter of priorities, with attention going to the younger children. A headmaster in another area stated that 'attendance after Christmas is effectively voluntary' for the fifth year, while a group of fifth year boys elsewhere said of their absent contemporaries, 'Oh! they just left early'.

d. The incidence varied widely from one school to another and within each school, but in all the schools truancy received serious attention.

Truancy after registration was also an acknowledged problem. Most schools had several pupils who on occasions had been marked as present and had then vanished for the rest of the session, whether outside or inside the school premises, and they noted that such absence often led to further offences, whether in the form of graffiti in the toilets (often coupled with smoking), or shop-lifting expeditions in the town.

3 How the schools approached their problems

The striking factor about the schools visited was not so much what they did, though this was sometimes remarkable, as the underlying principles on which their action was based. In most cases the heads had led the way: in consultation with their staffs, a basic philosophy had been hammered out. Once agreed, it had become central to everything that was done and a safeguard against mere gimmickry. As one headmaster reminded his staff in an internal discussion paper, "progressive is not synonymous with new .....".

It was clear that there were common guiding principles which underlay much of the work of the schools visited. It was their response to local needs which made for variation.

Broadly summarised, and in some cases using their own words, their views were that:

1. The need of the individual child, professionally perceived, should govern the school's provision.

2. "The child who arrives at school is not a clean slate upon which we are free to make our mark. Each child comes from a particular environment involving multiple factors which have contributed and are contributing to his development as an individual". (Headmaster in staff handbook.)

3. The work of the school, therefore, is indivisible (curricular and pastoral) and must be conceived as a cooperative exercise with parents, social workers, police, probation service and any other service or adult involved with a pupil.

4. There is a need for constant reappraisal of:

a. the teacher's role: "any pupil support system must begin and end with the classroom teacher".

b. The curriculum: "a well managed classroom is one of the best instruments of pastoral care" and continuity for the pupil is best ensured by the form tutors teaching their own groups. Classroom work should be structured to stretch the pupils' abilities to their limits while tempering the wind to the vulnerable child.

c. Organisation and management: "if you want something to happen in a large organisation you must structure it to happen..... it is unfair to the pupils to leave things to chance".

d. Discipline: "a large school must organise itself so that every pupil feels that a teacher knows him or her well".

"Discipline depends on mutual respect between pupils and staff and is best developed from constant surveillance rather than spasmodic purges" (headmaster, in internal paper). Rules should be few, reasonable and enforceable to make a consistent and secure framework for pupils and staff, but flexible enough to meet individual needs where this is desirable.

Implicit in much of the work seen was the belief that the object of good education is the same for all children: to enable them to make the best use of their particular talents and capabilities in school and later in the adult world. Children from inadequate home backgrounds have particular educational needs, and their progress may be slower than some of their more fortunate contemporaries from homes which maintain a continuing and informed interest in their progress.

The problems outlined are complex and, as was to be expected, none of the schools visited had found complete solutions to them. In many there were approaches which promised well in meeting some of the difficulties. These approaches were evident in their organisation, their teaching, and their pastoral practices.

4 The schools at work

All the heads agreed that the key to good discipline lay in good teaching. Pastoral care, despite some specific organisation, could not be divorced from the work in the classroom. One said categorically, "Good teaching is a most important element in pastoral care", while another pointed out that "poor discipline in lessons is often due to poor choice of material or teaching methods". It followed that form teachers and class subject teachers were expected to concern themselves with the total development of the pupil.

Schools recognised three particular areas of concern: the transition from primary to secondary education; the normal strains of adolescence during a period when teaching at school is increasingly subject-based and curricular choices are having to be made in the third year; and the interrelationship of examination courses with the world of employment in the fourth and fifth years. In addition, the schools visited were all more or less affected by the greater need for remedial education characteristic of disadvantaged areas. Some had further differentiated between those pupils with remedial problems, either because English was not their native language or because of limitations in earlier experiences, and those who were genuine slow learners.

The ways in which the general ideas set out in Chapter 3 were applied in the schools may best be illustrated by describing in more detail the work of a few schools.

School A

School A serves an old industrial area of a large city in the north-east. One old established community dating from 17th century settlement has recently been rehoused under a redevelopment programme in its own area. This disadvantaged district provides one quarter of the school's pupils. The rest of the catchment area, apart from a few owner-occupied houses, consists of terraces of small Victorian and Edwardian houses. Unemployment is endemic in the area and runs at 14 per cent even in normal times.

The school itself is housed in two places: the senior forms in a fairly new building which was previously a boys' technical school, and the 11 and 12 year olds in a conglomeration of buildings originally provided for the 800 children of all ages from the 'old' community.

This annexe for the 11 and 12 year olds is one and a half miles from the main building and its remoteness could be a grave hindrance to the work of the school. Staff have to commute between the two sites and the head spoke ruefully of the difficulties this caused every year when drawing up a timetable. In fact, the second building has been turned into a positive educational asset. It has enabled staff to give first and second year pupils a curriculum and environment specially planned for them. The headmaster has made the lower school a starting point for a complete reappraisal of the work of the rest of the school.

Imaginative adaptation of the old building has converted a central hall, with classrooms leading off it, into a carpeted humanities library and resource centre with a full-time librarian in charge. The dividing screen between two of the classrooms has been removed to make a good sized lecture room for 'lead lessons' in a humanities course, with a well used exhibition area at the back. In addition to the stimulating material provided by the teachers, the whole centre is alive with well displayed children's work. Teachers take it in turns to lead the team in their own specialist fields. A theme is chosen with a definite subject bias and the leader is responsible for launching it, providing follow-up materials and ideas for the six week period. This centre is much visited by parents, local teachers and student-teacher groups. Pupils take visitors for granted and walk about with a quiet air of assurance. The mathematics department also has a specially planned area in this building. Mathematics groups are setted from the second year onwards and there is a great deal of individual work, which allows children to progress at their own rate. Systematic monitoring revealed marked improvement in both literacy and numeracy during the first two years.

In an area where physical violence is never far away, the teachers argue that new methods of working, especially team teaching, have virtually eliminated classroom disruption. Where one teacher has difficulty, it is easy to send the pupil concerned to work with another teacher without any sense of personal failure or embarrassment. It is felt that the good quality

of the new styles of work also contributes to the pupils' higher motivation to work, and there are plans to extend these approaches to the upper school.

Heads of year in the lower school do less programmed teaching than those in the upper school, to enable them to have time to meet the many parents whom they encourage to visit. The lower school buildings are near the district with most socio-economic problems and this too helps diffident parents from that district in visiting the school, especially as many of them were once themselves pupils in these same buildings. In February, personal invitations are sent out to each parent, and appointments to visit made to suit their convenience. Last year as many as 90 per cent of parents responded and came. If necessary a head of year will visit the home but generally parents are happy to come to the school, where children will cheerfully conduct them round. With such an atmosphere, it is easy to consult parents in cases of special need.

Relationships with the four main contributory primary schools are also carefully cultivated. The head of first year and the headmaster visit each school personally. Such matters as individual health defects are noted for the benefit of the pupils' new teachers.

A special feature of the annexe is the unit for Chinese children. The school has some 60 Chinese pupils, their language problems often masking high intelligence and a great capacity for hard work. The school was allowed additional staffing (one and a half teachers) to set up a unit for these children. Their English teacher spent eight years in China and is thus able to concentrate on the linguistic skills she knows to be most difficult for those whose first language is Chinese. She has transformed a former metalwork shop into a stimulating environment for English teaching, eking out the hardware with a range of homely aids such as an old telephone hand set, clothes displayed in a 'shop', a pair of scales, plants, and wall-sheets illustrating shapes and number. Groups of six pupils are withdrawn and while one uses the Language-master, the teacher, using a carefully prepared selection of flashcards and sheets, works orally on, for example, the perplexing English habit of varying meaning with vowel sounds where the Chinese rely on intonation, or the English use of the apostrophe as a possessive. The children respond fast and display a considerable capacity for sustained attention.

During the weeks when the first years are studying China, a Chinese 'shop' is held in the lunch hour, when the Chinese children bring their native products (bamboo shoots, ginger, rice bowls) to sell, and this money provides additional help for the unit. The Chinese community also gives its children full backing, using a room in the building on Sundays when they themselves instruct the children in their own culture.

At the end of the second year, all the pupils transfer to the upper school, which is already familiar to them from their weekly use of various specialist areas, notably physical education, art and craft. On the basis of a linguistic test at the end of the second year, some of these children are now recommended to give up the study of a second language: possibly because of their lack of success, they are not the most tractable group to teach.

In this school, the headmaster takes the group who have dropped the study of a foreign language, partly because he likes teaching and thinks it important that he and his senior staff should be seen as good practitioners themselves but also because he finds it an excellent way of getting to know his more vulnerable pupils before they get into trouble.

Choices of options are made in the spring term of the third year. This involves the senior mistress and head of third year in individual interviews with every third year pupil.

The head deliberately restricts the range of choice, insisting on a fairly wide compulsory core: English, mathematics, a science subject, two humanities subjects, an art and craft subject, physical education, and guidance.

Two more subjects can then be added from two lists including modern languages, commercial subjects, three sciences and various arts and crafts.

Though much still remains to be done in the upper school, there are signs of development here too, including some CSE work for less academic pupils. There is a compulsory non-examination course called 'Guidance' in the fourth and fifth years. It comprises 'moral education' and careers guidance and is very popular. The need for fresh approaches may be indicated by an increase in truancy in the later years. Examination work does not meet the needs of all pupils.

The local authority allows each secondary school to claim additional staffing for measures to overcome disciplinary problems. Led by the head, the staff decided to incorporate the additional teachers into the main staff in order to reduce the size of teaching groups, rather than to establish a special unit. Doubts remained, however, among some teachers. Recently, therefore, a 'mini-experiment' was tried in the lower school. A room was manned all day by a teacher, and to this room any disruptive child might be sent with his school work by a head of department. At the end of three weeks so few pupils had been sent to the room that the experiment was abandoned.

The school has its share of difficult pupils and bad behaviour, but it employs traditional school punishments sparingly. The major behavioural problems are really outside school, and some of these make youth work of the traditional kind difficult. However, staff from the upper school run evening youth clubs for their year groups.

All form tutors in the first year are expected to take their pupils away for a residential week during the year. More than one teacher paid tribute to this idea, especially where the normal timetable made it impossible for him or her to teach all the children in the group.

The informal contact at youth club and residential centre between teachers and pupils undoubtedly helps relationships.

An additional asset in this area is the school nurse. As a matter of policy, the Area Health Authority has placed a nurse in each large comprehensive school. She remains on the staff of the Area Health Authority and thus constitutes a direct link with the medical services. In the course of routine first aid, she is the recipient of many personal confidences and is able, in some cases, to give direct advice and assistance. Her role as counsellor is somewhat restricted, however, if she has any other pupils with her in the single medical room. As yet, the value of such an appointment is only partly realised. A school nurse can become a valuable member of any team concerned with health education.

School B

School B appears deceptively rural. Recently built in a village which still retains some of its traditional atmosphere, it is separated from an indus-

trial city in the midlands by a large river. Caught up in both educational and local government reorganisation, it serves a redevelopment area of the city from which it is cut off by the river. Work on community lines is thus to a great extent precluded. The redevelopment area houses a number of ethnic groups of whom that of Caribbean ancestry is the largest (19 per cent), but at least 13 nationalities are represented including Indian (4 per cent) and Pakistani (4 per cent). The number on roll is about 800.

There is a high incidence of severe behavioural problems in this school, probably related to the deprivations that many children suffer at home. The head drew attention to the difficulties teachers experienced in providing challenging school work for children who were already under stress, difficulties which could lead to confrontations. His response to such problems was to provide individual treatment for each child, whether or not other children thought it fair. At the same time he insisted on setting the highest standards both in personal appearance and achievement and in the quality and upkeep of the school environment. In this school, pastoral care and curricular provision are inextricably linked.

Efforts are made to ensure a smooth transfer from primary to secondary school through personal contact with all those involved. The first year tutor visits the four main primary schools and later the head of lower school does likewise, using the occasion to learn about and record the special needs of individual pupils. Parents of the primary school pupils are next invited to visit the secondary school. There is a general discussion followed by the opportunity to meet individual teachers to consider specific points where necessary. Finally, the primary pupils and their teachers spend half a day at the secondary school to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings and to meet the first year teachers. In addition, the secondary school organises five-a-side soccer tournaments between the contributory schools and acts as host. At the time of the HMI visit a similar scheme for netball tournaments was being planned.

As in school A, there is a humanities course. In the first two years it is taught in mixed ability groups, a half year at a time, by a team of teachers. The remedial teachers have recently joined the team to enable their pupils to have the personal help they need without withdrawing them from a stimulating lesson. The programme for this group has been most carefully constructed to ensure that the pupil can achieve success and feel that his knowledge and understanding are developing. At the time of the visit, the

children were studying prehistoric man, a topic which most had met before. The approach was now systematic and archaeological, including the use of diagrams to place prehistoric implements in their correct period, and even the less able enjoyed mastering the correct terminology and recognising the evidence. Staff too recognised the advantages of this approach, not the least being the decrease in restless behaviour. Two large open areas were allocated for this work. Another was being set aside in another part of the building to allow for similar developments in environmental studies.

The school has made the most of a number of large open areas and circulation spaces, and in this setting staff supervision is unobtrusive but effective. The general atmosphere is thus mature, quiet and gracious, with carpeted areas decorated with plants and trees grown by the pupils, together with their paintings and three-dimensional work.

Everything possible is done to underline the fact that the school cares about each individual. Many of the staff, some still quite young and inexperienced, are extremely well informed about the children in their care, both through informal conversation with one another and through the more formal processes of compiling and reading records, writing reports and picking up signs and symptoms in the normal course of work. The staffing ratio has been favourable, (1:15); but a great deal of hard work has been necessary in addition to teaching. 'Disruptive' can carry a really violent connotation in this school, yet no one seems to want a unit to be provided to cope with behaviour difficulties. In general, if they know a child is under real stress, teachers will make considerable allowances, while defending civilised values and the just claims of the rest of the community.'

Frequent praise and recognition of achievement also play their part. The defined procedures for dealing with behavioural difficulties fulfil the double role of reassuring the staff and giving the pupils a known framework. In cases of need the school will call an inter-services case conference for full discussion of a child.

The importance of developing each pupil's self-esteem is acknowledged in a variety of ways. A Personal Development course is taken by every pupil throughout the school. A senior teacher who is a trained counsellor is its driving force. Pupils in the first three years have one lesson a week in

later years they receive two lessons a week under the broadened title of Personal Development and Careers. From the first, pupils are introduced to group activities, decision making, and discussion, both in Personal Development lessons and in interviews with the careers, pastoral and academic staff, and they are helped systematically to self-awareness in order that they may appraise the careers possibilities put before them. The early part of this course is also a valuable background to the options choices in the third year.

Unemployment among school leavers is not a serious problem in the area, especially at an unskilled level. The school produces a leaflet, *Leaving School,* which tells prospective leavers of a number of the procedures they will need to familiarise themselves with, including income tax forms and certificates for absence from work. In addit on, the pupil's final school report takes the form of an open letter which can serve as a testimonial if this is required at short notice in the holidays.

Personal contact with local employers makes it possible for the school to make realistic (and imaginative) recommendations, and a check is kept on the subsequent careers of many of the pupils.

Recognising that many of their children have little experience of individual conversation with adults, the staff seize every opportunity to encourage this. Thus, in the course of third year option choices, each child is personally interviewed by a teacher several times before making a final decision, and there are fifth-year interviews geared to career aspirations. Staff are trained in interview techniques by the teacher-counsellor.

An additional personal service is the 'Rent a reader' scheme, which augments remedial provision. Twenty teacher volunteers take a slow reader for individual reading practice during their own time for two periods each week.

The success of the school is hard to gauge in simple terms. There are pointers, however. Until a few years ago, some local parents were refusing to take up places offered for their children; now they are asking for them to attend this school. The school has also been asked on a number of occasions to take in pupils excluded from other schools though the headmaster stresses that this is a reciprocal service between himself and some

other heads. The occasions on which children are finally excluded from this school are rare, particularly when seen against the numbers of disturbed children in the school.

School C

School C with about 1,800 pupils on roll is in East London. It has a staffing ratio of one teacher to 16.2 pupils. In 1972 the three schools on this 50 acre site were amalgamated. Happily, the buildings for the then grammar school and the boys' and girls' secondary modern schools were planned in 1950 as a single unit, and they have adapted readily to their new use. Although covering a wide area, the buildings have made the difficulties of working on this campus minimal, and there is adequate space for the movement of such large numbers of young people in wide corridors.

The environment ... which this school is set is the result of the continual outward growth of a major conurbation over many decades. Buildings surround the school on three sides, ranging from densely packed terrace housing of the 1890s through inter-war homes to modern high-rise flats, and there has been considerable settlement of ethnic minority groups in the area. A container depot runs along much of the length of the boundary at the back of the school, its stacked containers forming an irregular wall contiguous with the piled-up vehicles of a car breakers' yard next door. A line of pylons straddles the playing fields behind the school.

The area is changing, owing to the decline of manufacturing industry and the lack of demand for skilled and semi-skilled workers. High unemployment affects both school leavers and older people. The more ambitious parents are moving out of the area and for this reason alone some 60 pupils leave every year. The population movements have created a situation of potential social instability. The school faces two major curricular challenges: the fact that some 45 per cent of pupils in the first year require remedial work in reading, and the needs of a large group of pupils for whom English is a second language. The headmaster has accordingly geared his resources to meet these needs while striving to adapt and maintain as fully as possible the academic standards on which the former grammar schoool prided itself.

There is a remedial reading centre which has a substantial allocation of funds each year for books and apparatus. It is based in a large, well equipped room divided to enable small group and individual work to go on at the same time. Three teachers are employed full-time in the centre.

In 1976, 150 first year children were found, after testing, to need remedial help with reading. In practice only 55 (36 per cent) can be given specific help within the centre in small withdrawal groups if the remedial department is to meet its other commitments through the school. To help to resolve this problem the English staff teaching first and second year classes have time allocated in which they withdraw children with difficulties under the guidance of the remedial department. In addition some sixth formers help on an individual basis with some children.

The provision of remedial help in the second and third years is greatly reduced, involving 12 second-year and 15 third-year pupils, but in the fourth and fifth years it is much increased by the offer of a basic reading and writing course within the option system. This imaginative provision, in the context and atmosphere of this school, carries no stigma, especially as it caters, among others, for the able pupils from ethnic minority groups for whom this is the next stage of mastering a new language. At the time of the survey, 53 pupils in the fourth and fifth years were involved. The programme of this course is geared directly to preparing pupils for entry to work, with an emphasis on reading and writing in relationship to form filling, job application and general letter writing. Pupils are taught in groups determined by an assessment of their needs to learn language skills, and there is movement between the groups. The head of department is also the Adult Literacy Tutor for the area. This aspect of his work takes place in the school's reading centre, and brings him into contact with the parents of some of the children in need of support. There is also a department for teaching English as a second language, established in a permanent base, with a full-time head of department, a second full-time teacher, and a peripatetic teacher who comes to the school for the whole of every morning. Since the visit took place the LEA has been able to extend the part-time help to full-time.

The school recognises that some pupils need special help with English in other areas of the curriculum, beyond that of the initial learning stage. Such provision must take into account the nature and vocabulary of each

subject and has led to close cooperation between language and subject teachers. Three departments are at present involved; social studies, mathematics and English. Teachers provide the language staff in advance with their lesson content so that the pupils can learn the appropriate vocabulary and structures before the lesson takes place. In one case, the specialist teacher took a group to the courts to introduce them to a situation that was to be discussed in a social studies lesson. The school is gradually expanding its library provision to include a greater range of books to reflect the various backgrounds of the school population, and some departments, particularly English and social studies, have made considerable progress in this direction.

A very wide range of examination options is provided for all pupils, not only at O and A levels, but also for CSE and other public examinations, for example of the Royal Society of Arts. In the third of the three bands into which the fourth and fifth years are divided, CSE examinations are available for those who can manage them but who need additional non-examination courses adapted to their needs. Some of the CSE courses have a vocational element: examples include applied science, catering, family and child development, technology, engineering drawing, business studies, outdoor education.

The course on family and child development involves a study of issues encountered in raising children, particularly language development, and offers practical experience of working in a playgroup run in the school. The group runs for two sessions each week for ten children on each occasion. Ten pupils are attached to the playgroup, each one working with a single child. A detailed child study results from this work and contributes to a CSE folder. Fourth- and fifth-year groups also work in local primary schools. So far this course has been taken only by girls, with whom it is popular.

Despite its fair share of behavioural problems, some reflecting social tensions in the wider community outside, the school decided, after an 18-month trial, to close its special unit, preferring to deal with all pastoral problems through the normal school structure of year heads and heads of school. It may be significant that such misbehaviour as there is is quite rare in the classrooms, and is chiefly found in playgrounds and their associated areas. Disruptive behaviour, where it exists, is said to characterise those

children living in the most socially deprived areas who are also among those with the lowest academic achievement in the school. Attendance has long been a serious problem, but a recent all-out effort, by both school and local education authority, has led to a definite improvement in the situation. A weakness in the system, in an area of considerable mobility of families, is that a family which has moved out of the school's catchment area to live, but whose children still attend the school, has no assigned education welfare officer and contact between school and family is therefore more difficult to maintain.

In this area shopkeepers are loath to prosecute offenders of school age, but willing to inform the school of offences. Such incidents usually happen during the lunch period when pupils leave the premises either to have their lunch or after their school meal. The school recognises that there are occasions when it must involve itself in problems outside school because the parents themselves are sometimes unable to help their children.

School D

School D is in the north-west. It was created about 11 years ago by the amalgamation of three secondary modern schools. It serves an inner city area in which there has been much demolition, and much movement of population. Much of the housing which remains is old, of poor quality, and let out in bedsitting rooms. The upper and lower schools are about a mile away from one another, in old buildings which have had some more recent additions. The number of pupils has been declining in recent years, partly because of the changes in the neighbourhood, and partly because some parents in the area have chosen other schools for their children: there are now about 600 pupils. The school serves a multi-racial area, but the only substantial language problems are those of the 15 or so Chinese children who are recent immigrants.

Very many of the families represented have serious problems. In relation to a recent first year entry it was recorded that in 44 per cent of cases the head of the family was unemployed, and in 34 per cent of cases mother or father suffered from chronic illness. The level of income may be judged from the fact that even before the alterations to the scales in the

autumn of 1976, nearly half the children received free school dinners. With the decline in numbers there has been an increase in the incidence of children with problems of learning or behaviour, and a decline in the general level of ability as measured by tests of verbal reasoning.

There have been very few changes in the teaching staff in the past two years, but before that for some years there was a staff turnover of about one teacher in five each year and at one stage there were ten probationer teachers on the staff. The overall pupil/teacher ratio is generous – about 12:1. There has been considerable discussion among the staff about the curriculum and behavioural problems. The work of providing induction courses for probationer teachers, originally started by the head with weekly discussion about aims and objectives, school rules, incidents that arose, choice of books and materials etc, has been superseded by the LEA's introduction of a city-wide pilot induction scheme. Under this scheme teacher-tutors are appointed in schools which have probationer teachers on their staff. Also helpful as a means of in-service training for both senior and more junior staff are the 'at risk' meetings held at intervals of one or two months to consider and decide upon a course of action for a few difficult cases which may involve truancy, behavioural and learning difficulties. Members of the local authority staff, including education welfare officers, social workers, educational psychologists and other specialists, also attend these meetings.

The pupils in the first three years are in mixed ability groups and follow a common curriculum, but children with learning difficulties can be withdrawn from English and mathematics and given special help in very small groups. Fourth- and fifth-year children are taught English and mathematics in two bands, in one of which all the potential O-level candidates are included. The remainder of the curriculum consists of one period for careers work and five further subjects chosen by each pupil from a range of subjects, with help and guidance from teachers, which stops short of interference with pupils' decisions. Each of the five subjects chosen is taken for five lessons a week and the aim is to provide for the academic and practical needs of pupils by including traditional subjects but also combined studies such as design for living, social education, health education, environmental studies, commercial studies, and community service. In some of these studies the careers work is extended. Special help is available in English and mathematics for individual pupils

who have difficulties. In the small sixth form, pupils take or re-take O-level courses and a few work for A-level examinations. There is thus no specific non-examination course. Most pupils take one or more subjects for the CSE or O-level examination.

Pastoral care is in the first place the responsibility of form teachers, helped and supported by year group tutors, and the heads of upper and lower school. A school counsellor is available to help children with special problems. The care system is in the charge of the first deputy head.

An 'Intermediate Unit' was started in 1973, to help assess learning and behaviour problems which arise in the first three years. After assessment with the help of specialists, including a psychologist and the counsellor, a recommendation for placement is made and as a result a pupil may be transferred to another school (special or secondary) or helped by part or full-time attendance for a period in the unit. Teachers have noted three particular types of children referred to the unit – the bright but explosive, who as a result are sometimes under-achieving; the clinically maladjusted, who may need to be placed in special schools; and those who are failing educationally and as a result are causing special problems, perhaps by reason of their behaviour.

Apart from the unit, the special help with learning difficulties referred to above is given by members of the progress department. They take all the English work with the 11 and 12 year olds, which limits the need for withdrawal of pupils for other help. They also visit lessons in other subjects, for example science and home economics, on a regular basis to help with and advise about less able pupils.

A particular feature at this school is the care taken when pupils get into trouble with the law and are sent away for intermediate treatment, to a community home, or to a detention centre, to keep in touch with them by writing and even by visiting, and then to help in planning their return to the school, including welcoming them back.

The teaching seen was characterised by thoroughness of preparation and in many cases by lively interaction between teacher and taught. This was true of class after class visited in the fifth year, and of subjects as various as improvised drama, astronomy, volleyball, and biology. The pupil's intentness on the task in hand, and the results achieved, were

frequently noteworthy, the more so because of the knowledge, carefully documented by the school, of the underlying problems many of the pupils had.

The staff appeared to be working as a team, ready and willing to substitute one for another. Four or five teachers on a rota provided effective supervision in breaks and at lunchtime. Senior staff were alert to threatened difficulties and ready to provide swift support whenever and wherever it might be needed.

The school employs when necessary a conventional range of sanctions including detention, the imposition of tasks, and the daily report card. More positively there are merit marks for 11 and 12 year olds, and for more substantial matters, commendation slips which are attached to the pupil's record. There is no corporal punishment. Some years ago the head after discussions with the staff gave two years notice of its withdrawal: within one term its use had dropped dramatically and at the end of two years there was hardly any corporal punishment to phase out. As a last resort the school uses the sanction, allowed by the LEA, of suspending a pupil from school for one, two, or three days, and of asking the parents to bring the child back to school so that staff can discuss the problem with them. The use of this practice is minimal and all such cases are reported to the governing body. Permanent exclusion of a pupil has occurred on only four occasions in the life of the school. It seems probable that in this school the desire to maintain good relationships with the teachers is a powerful incentive to many pupils to behave acceptably.

There still remain considerable problems of school non-attendance, particularly in the later years. Great efforts are being made to get co-operation from parents, both by inviting them to visit the school and by teachers visiting homes. Some parents in doubt as to whether their children are at school make a practice of telephoning the school to check. The education welfare officer visits the school daily, and cases are followed up promptly. The school is however concerned to accept the fullest possible responsibility for coping with its problems, and, in order to develop in children good habits of school attendance, the staff of the lower school particularly take energetic action about non-attendance. This involves a good deal of planned home visiting, but on occasion a teacher who early in the school day notices an absence goes out to bring a particular child into school.

School E

School E is a school of some 1,200 girls in a typical run-down inner London area. There are some new blocks of flats, but housing consists mainly of old and run-down flats, many of which are awaiting modernisation: meanwhile many stand empty and have been seriously vandalised.

There is considerable movement among the multi-racial population which includes a large proportion of children from the long-established West Indian community who have recently been joined by newcomers from Cyprus, Mauritius, Portugal and Spain and at the time of the visit there had been a big increase in the number of girls for whom English was not the mother tongue. Unemployment is high and there are many single parent families. There is evidence of much violence in the neighbourhood, though aggressive behaviour in school is almost always directed against other girls rather than against staff. The school became comprehensive in 1957 when it was formed from two existing schools. The buildings are old and on two sites some distance apart. Considerable efforts have been made, however, to make them pleasant and cheerful with good displays of pupils' work. There have also been some modern extensions, and physical provision throughout has been modernised.

From its inception the school has made a conscious effort to meet the needs of children from an acknowledged area of disadvantage. Girls who need remedial help can either be withdrawn in small groups or given extra help in the classroom. Within the normal class groups, teachers are encouraged to organise girls in the groups most suited to the work in hand: pairs, groups, on their own or as a class.

The compensatory department has a staff which includes four full-time teachers. The two compensatory units, one in the upper and one in the lower school, are each run by one of these teachers. Pupils, other than those with complex needs, are dealt with on a withdrawal basis. Most of the pupils in the units fall into one or more of three groups:

i. pupils in need of remedial help

ii. pupils with behavioural/emotional problems

iii. pupils who truant and those who suffer from acute anxieties connected with attending school.

The aim in these units is to provide special help with the basic skills since almost all who attend them are underachieving, but also to provide for girls whose needs cannot be wholly met within the normal curriculum.

When the headmistress was appointed in 1974 she recognised that many pupils were underachieving. She concluded that a central aim should be to equip them with practical basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and oracy and scientific literacy, to get them to think, to understand, to assess and to evaluate what they learned.

Writing for parents she stated, 'As pupils they have a responsibility to come regularly, on time, in uniform, equipped for work (with pen, pencil etc); to put their best effort into their learning; to help other members of the school community; to behave in a mature and adult way towards each other and towards the staff and the school itself. They have the right to be well taught; to be well-informed about what is happening in the school and why; to be consulted on matters of school policy and to have their views heard and taken into account through the School Council. If our pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them and why, they are more likely to benefit from their time with us'.

This is a social priority school with a staffing ratio 1:16. In such a multi-racial community, it must be encouraging for these pupils to encounter a number of teachers from different racial groups; at least four West Indians, including the head of physical education, a Nigerian and a Pakistani, to say nothing of Greek Cypriot, Irish, Polish, Latvian, French and Tunisian teachers. From the school's own resource allowance, a non-teaching counsellor is employed for four days a week. From 1974 to 1976 the Social Services Department provided a school-based social worker, to work within the school framework of referrals but ultimately within that of the area office of the social services which is based across the road from the school. Since 1975 the school has had its own social worker for four days a week, funded from its own resources. Cooperation with parents is considered to be a vital aspect of the work. The headmistress feels that without the support of parents and their active encouragement, it is difficult for a girl to do herself justice. Great efforts are made to keep parents well informed about what is happening in the school and there is a regular parents' newsletter written by the headmistress. The introductory handbook says that parents are really welcome to look around, to observe lessons, to talk to staff and to help or be helped in any way possible.

There is an active parent-teacher association and in 1975 parents were invited to discuss with the staff their feelings about the existing format of pupils' reports. It emerged that parents wished to know where their daughter stood in relation to herself and others. They did not wish the truth to be hidden from them or from her, since they felt that she would work harder if her work appeared to matter more.

The feeling was also expressed by parents that the school was not sufficiently in touch with what went on in the world outside. Since then the work of the careers guidance department has been developed and extended. One imaginative feature was called 'Workout'. A number of local employers, trade unionists, careers officers, parents and Training Services Agency representatives were invited to an afternoon conference for school leavers. Thirty-five 'guests' accepted and were given a special lunch by the housecraft department. The afternoon was opened by a short speech from a member of the Manpower Services Commission. The conference then separated into groups of about 20 girls, each with a panel including an employer, a careers officer, a trade union representative and, where possible, a parent and an ex-pupil. In this hour and three quarters, the pupils had an opportunity to ask individual questions. Finally, at a full session in the hall girls were given the opportunity to comment on the session. The response was appreciative on all sides and future planning will take into consideration the lessons of this first attempt.

Although most girls are working for examinations in the fourth and fifth years, there are a number of option courses designed to promote personal interests and self-esteem; community studies offer elements in health, careers, social studies, commerce and the humanities, while activities available include Yoga, costume and props, riding, rowing, judo, housecraft, drama, archery, gym, trampolining, swimming, embroidery and needlework. A course of grooming gave rise to increased self-awareness among the pupils. There is in this school an awareness, too, of the importance of the model that the teacher provides. The headmistress writes in the staff handbook, "The teacher through everyday behaviour within and outside the classroom, offers a model (for better or for worse) of how an adult behaves".

Though relatively long established as a comprehensive, this school acknowledges that it still has problems to solve, a salutary reminder that there are no final answers in education.

Some general points drawn from all eighteen schools

For many pupils the change from primary school to secondary school can be a stimulating experience, but all the schools visited were aware that for some pupils it can be very confusing, even bewildering.

To some 11 year olds even the smallest secondary school can present a vast and complex picture. The search for specialist rooms amidst large blocks of buildings along unfamiliar corridors can bring the fear of being lost, and the programme may involve the pupil in contact with many more teachers than in the primary school.

As teachers considered how pupils could be enabled to take full advantage of the fresh opportunities presented by their change of school, questions had arisen as to how far past failures and limitations should be taken into account. One head argued, "If we are to provide for those of our children who are beset by problems we should begin by providing for them a school organisation which clearly expresses the belief that all children are of equal importance. . . ." In some of the schools, but not all, non-streaming had been seen as the most suitable organisation for such a purpose. In the school just quoted it was claimed that there was little relevance in the division into 'academic' or 'less academic', since nine pupils only in the fifth year (200 pupils) had a verbal reasoning quotient of over 110. This head therefore organised mixed ability teaching to insure against 'whole classes wearing labels'.

Although interesting examples of team teaching were seen, it should not be inferred that this is the only answer to curricular problems. There were many examples of well structured work in single specialisms which stretched the mind and fostered systematic methods of work and enquiry.

As might be expected the quality of the education varied widely, not only between schools, but also between departments within schools. Exciting, purposeful work was seen in every part of the curriculum, often sparked off by lively, thoughtful teachers. These teachers were enthusiasts and willing to devote much spare time, some of it during the holidays, to the essential preparation. None would have been effective, however, without the personal rapport between teachers and taught which fre-

quently formed the mainspring of motivation and incentive for the student of whatever age.

For some pupils motivation diminishes rapidly from the third year onwards, particularly for those with a poor level of achievements and low aspirations. Most teachers recognised that some reappraisal was required for the less academic pupil at this stage. It was noteworthy that while special help had been designed for the slow learner, the greatest resistance to school came not from them but from those who were just above the border-line of those qualifying for this help. For many of them the transition to examination-based fully specialist teaching was unpalatable and irrelevant. Remedial groups with their high staffing ratios had relatively few attendance difficulties; in one group the attendance rate had risen from 65 per cent to 85 per cent. Here it seems likely that pupils were responding less to modified curricular provision, which was often narrower than in the main school, than to the individual attention given and the good relationships with teachers which had been established.

The malaise of the third year is in part an expression of adolescent confusion. For some young people this period of their development can involve great additional stress. One head identified the factors in a pupil's school life which could intensify such pressures: transfer at 11 plus, the search for personal identity and the need for close personal relationships, the crisis of examinations and the search for a vocational role. For those destined for semi-skilled work, the conventional approach to examinations holds little appeal. Understandably their interests turn towards living and working in the adult world. An increasing number take part-time jobs which provide them with money to spend on commercially produced entertainment specifically geared to their age-group.

In areas of high unemployment, even the 4th and 5th year interviews with careers officers can seem a little unreal, as do examination courses which culminate in the summer term for those who know they are leaving school at Easter. In one school visited this group constituted 33 per cent of the fifth year.

Pupils moving from one area to another, moreover, can find themselves at a complete loss when confronted with the examination syllabus of a different Board. This is particularly serious with young people returning

from community homes to their own area. Schools frequently find it impossible to place them in an appropriate course in their age group once examination work has started.

Most pupils work on courses aimed at external examinations. Even the very slow learners can sit a single examination in a subject of their choice. Of all the schools visited, only three were running non-examination forms in the fourth and fifth years, although a number were going to great trouble to design CSE courses with the less able in mind, and backed these with a remarkable degree of additional help in language and number. Some of these CSE courses are educationally valuable and attractive even for an early leaver. Absence rates did suggest, however, that much of the provision for the less academic child was missing its mark, especially when compared with the good attendance rates of the less able pupils for whom there were special courses. A number of heads voiced their concern over the undue number of absentees during public examinations and in some cases this anxiety was no doubt well founded, but this did not appear to be so much of a problem as the number of unsuccessful candidates who had been entered.

A certain amount of disillusionment with external examinations and their worth was expressed even among more academic pupils. In two schools, both in the north of England, it was said that many young people who left school up to three years ago were still unemployed in spite of moderate CSE qualifications.

One head, in a northern area of severe unemployment, was wholehearted in condemning the indiscriminate use of examination goals, although he acknowledged that there remained strong pressure in their favour from many pupils, their parents and some employers.

Several heads of schools with sixth-form courses for the less academic pupil stressed the value of these courses. They said that young people who had developed more slowly because of adverse external conditions sometimes needed an additional year to consolidate earlier work and to bring it up to the standard which normally would have been reached by then.

5 Pastoral provision and organisation to meet the personal needs of the child

Planning for large numbers

In some of the schools visited the first comprehensive intake had not yet reached the fifth year, or had only just done so. These institutions were thus still coming to terms with the problems of organising larger schools, some of them on split sites. It was generally acknowledged that the greater the number of pupils, the greater the need for careful planning, to ensure that the needs of individuals were not subordinated to the demands of an anonymous group, that teachers could support one another, and that pupils could feel secure and be clear about what was expected of them. During the visits there were signs of difficulty with uncooperative pupils in only one or two schools.

Form tutors

The class teacher was the key figure, both in the day-to-day dealings of the form room and as a specialist teacher. Several schools made special efforts to consolidate these functions by ensuring that form tutors also taught their own forms wherever possible. Some schools went further, taking the form tutors up the school as their pupils moved from year to year, and in one school the practice had been found particularly helpful in enabling tutors to establish continuing relationships with families as pupils moved up the school. In most schools form tutors were responsible for registration and the associated comparisons of weekly attendance patterns, checking on lateness and notes of absence, assembling progress reports, acting as first reference point on disciplinary matters and keeping a record of any information or incidents which affected individual pupils. In School A, as has been noted, form tutors are expected to take their own group on a week's residential visit each year. Another school had its own cottage which was used for short-stay residential experience and was said to have helped to improve teacher-pupil relationships. Opinions were divided on the value of 'form time', a period in excess of the routine ten minutes a day

necessary for registration. Some schools had abandoned the idea because, in inexperienced hands, it had often proved at best a waste of time and at worst a breeding ground for disruptive behaviour. Other schools gave newcomers, especially young teachers, specific guidance on the use of such time, including suggestions for discussion topics and outlines of work for specific sessions. In talking to some of these young form tutors, HM Inspectors were often impressed by their detailed knowledge of the pupils in their care and by their sympathetic attitudes towards them.

Decisions on grouping

The decision to set up houses or year groups had been influenced by reasoning which stressed the desirability of either horizontal or vertical social groupings, or by traditions inherited from one or more schools before amalgamation, or sometimes by the buildings available. In one purpose-built school where house accommodation had been provided, a house system had been abandoned, though the school continued to value the house spaces as social areas.

House groups and year groups

The functions of heads of houses and heads of years were generally comparable. Both worked with and through tutor groups, though the head of a house had to work with a larger number of scattered staff than the head of a year who dealt purely with the form teachers in the year. Either could exert a good deal of authority, acting almost as a headmaster within the group. Disciplinary matters too serious for the ordinary tutor were referred to the head of house or year and this sometimes necessitated contact with parents, police, or social workers. Heads of house and year also had supportive and coordinating roles. Regular staff meetings held by some heads of year were valuable channels of communication between junior and senior staff, and between teachers of different phases and specialisms. The burdens of work for some heads of house and heads of year were considerable. Many of them kept confidential records of a very complex nature. The numbers under their care could range from 50 to 450. In the latter case, the paperwork alone was formidable, even

with the assistance of a second member of staff and a deputy head who handled much of the welfare work for the whole school. Since most carried at least a 75 per cent teaching load, every moment of non-teaching time had to be devoted to house business, including assembly times, breaks, and lunch hours. In some cases heads of year or house attempted to compensate for what they saw as the poor work of some form tutors by doing the work themselves rather than attempting to change the situation. In one or two schools there was a surprising lack of coordination between heads of year, and this sometimes resulted in pupils being ill-prepared for moving in September from one regime to another of quite a different character. Problems were also mentioned of coordinating the work of counsellors, heads of units and careers teachers with the general work of the school.

School counsellors

There were differences of opinion among heads about the value of counsellors as members of staff. One headmaster pointed out that unless he had a staffing ratio which was particularly good he could not afford to have a member of staff who did not teach. In some of the schools visited it was clear that the work of counsellors had earned the admiration and approval of their colleagues. One counsellor had recorded 81 pupils in one term as presenting particular difficulties and some of these difficulties were both complex and serious. It was interesting to see how senior teachers who had previously been counsellors had used their experience to influence school policy. In two cases Personal Development courses for all pupils had been set up; one of these was described in Chapter 4. In one case a head had been responsible for setting up an elaborate provision of additional help for children with specific learning difficulties.

School attendance and truancy

Unexplained absence was regarded by the schools as requiring immediate and sustained action: what might begin as a sign of trouble could rapidly become a serious problem in itself if it was ignored. Most schools were acutely aware of the need to monitor attendance frequently and systematically, not only at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions

but before starting each lesson. A number produced attendance patterns for each child at the end of every week, a practice which revealed the pupil who habitually took regular half days off without explanation.

In small industrial towns good education welfare officers could provide a quick response, and some schools paid high tribute to their persistence: for example, "He won't take 'no' for an answer". In some cases it was said that local people, such as shopkeepers, reported direct to the school when they saw pupils out and about in school time. In the inner cities and their outer areas, however, the problems were frequently too numerous and the duties too many for the number of officers available. Weekly visits to each school on their lists, when a discussion with the head or senior member of staff established priorities for home visits, were all that could be managed. Preventive work was rarely possible. In a large city it was easy for truants to disappear, whereas in a smaller community they could more readily be found.

Under such conditions, the education welfare officer could reach long-established truants only with the ultimate threat of legal action. Heads reported that such action might take a year to reach the Court, with a minimal fine where it was successful, and that few authorities favoured the statutory approach, which tended to bring the system into ridicule. In some areas education committees had devoted much time and trouble, through sub-committees, to calling in absentees and their parents and warning them of the action that could be taken against them. Such procedures were reported to be effective, but obviously depended upon the willingness of elected members to give up time to operate them.

Recognising the magnitude of the education welfare officer's task, some schools took their own action and a teacher went to visit the home immediately a pupil's absence was noticed. If not teaching in the first period, the form tutor might go, otherwise whoever was available did so—the counsellor, the head of year/house or deputy, or even, on occasion, the head. All stressed the necessity of fetching the child back at once, on every occasion.

Where appropriate some schools sought the cooperation of a child's Probation Officer. Others ran 'attendance leagues' between forms in a year or between houses, competing for trophies; sometimes small individual prizes were offered as well.

Internal truancy was another aspect of this problem: pupils who registered at the beginning of the session and then just disappeared, either on or off the school site. Where buildings were large with many entrances, and particularly if buildings were scattered, there was great scope for this, and in some cases the nearby homes of pupils whose parents were out at work all day proved attractive to truants. A number of schools had made a concerted onslaught on this problem, checking registers at the beginning of lessons and making frequent and systematic inspections of obvious withdrawal areas such as cloakrooms. One school provided 'hopping slips' to be filled in by the teacher as soon as the absence was noticed, and given to a pupil who went round with a 'travelling register' at every change of lesson. Unfortunately, truancy often led to further offences. As some girls said to a member of staff, 'We are bored. You know we are bored, so we drop out of that lesson and do over the lavatories'. Vandalism within the school was thus sometimes a result of truancy; there were also police reports which referred to crimes committed in the neighbourhood by juveniles in school hours.

Some of the truancy might be attributable to poor and unimaginative teaching which did not recognise the changed interests and attitudes of adolescents. Another factor might also be that in classes of normal size pupils' difficulties could not be given the personal attention they required. Where small units for behavioural and attendance difficulties had been set up in which pupils received a great deal of personal help, there was often a marked improvement in their attendance. One school reported improved attendance rates for linked courses.

Rules, sanctions and punishments

Most of the schools had rules which they regarded as an essential basis of security for all members of the community, but these were kept to a minimum. Such rules were usually broad guidelines rather than detailed regulations demanding rigid adherence. Thus, some schools gave their pupils a 'guide to uniform' which requested them to wear dress in the school's colours, with the style left to their choice. Some schools had no uniform, and in some of these schools difficulties had arisen in administering the grants provided by the local authority in cases of need. Uniform was regarded by some schools as a means of reducing social differences

between pupils and as a way to establish the school's image within its community. Issues such as the wearing of jewellery were handled sensitively, with explanations for rules that existed.

Sanctions in all the schools visited were traditional. In the main they appeared to depend for their effect on the respect of the pupil for the teacher administering punishment, on their irksomeness to the pupil, or on an appeal to communal responsibility. The time-honoured 'dressing down' could still be effective if the pupil respected the teacher. Referral to a senior teacher might lead to various courses of action. Bad behaviour in class might result in exclusion from that lesson or part of the timetable, with work set and done under the supervision of a senior member of staff. General misbehaviour or absenteeism might be met by being 'put on report' which involved a signature from the teacher of every lesson attended, and regular reporting back to the senior teacher at the beginning and end of every session.

Such treatment was irksome to many pupils and effective for some. It was significant, however, that staff reported that others liked being on report as it provided security and contacts with teachers and heads of year. In other schools recalcitrant pupils were attached to the senior teacher and followed him or her throughout the day. This too sometimes proved agreeable to some pupils. In most cases, however, a few days of such treatment sufficed, and the pupil was only too anxious to rejoin normal classes. Detention, however short, was regarded by one deputy head as effective 'because it means the child then has to go home on her own: and no children in this school ever willingly do anything on their own. They always take a friend with them.' Another school adopted the practice of detaining any late-comer for a time in proportion to the lateness. Detention has its problems, however, especially in a rough district in the winter. One head wrote in his *Guide to new teachers,* 'Great caution should be observed, particularly in detaining girls, and more especially in the winter months'. Dangers on the way home are not the only hazards in detaining girls. In one school a girl had assaulted a teacher when she missed the bus at the end of the afternoon. She had to get home to get tea for her younger brothers and sisters, in the absence of their mother who was out at work. A system of order marks for misdemeanours, used in some schools, appealed to the pupils' social sense as these contributed to the general total for the

house or year trophy. A measure of disapproval from their peers might thus result from an undue collection of such marks.

Corporal punishment

Corporal punishment was used sparingly in most of the schools and was decreasing. It was a matter that had clearly been widely discussed and carefully considered in many of them. Not all heads had felt that they should, or were able to, take action to eliminate all corporal punishment, and they mentioned some factors which they felt they had to take into account. They referred particularly to local traditions of child-rearing, the sincerely held views of valued members of their staffs for or against, and their wish to proceed cautiously in a field in which informed opinion was by no means unanimous. Of the schools visited, six used corporal punishment very little and were phasing it out, and seven did not use it at all: the manner in which one of these had discontinued it has already been described. Schools were sometimes inconsistent in their use of the cane: in one school it had been used three times as frequently in one house as in another of the same size during a particular term. Some schools reported that many children were so accustomed to severe beatings at home that they were impervious to corporal punishment at school, and indeed, that some children claimed to prefer it to other, more inconvenient, punishments.

Behavioural units and sanctuaries

For most heads the keys to sound discipline were a challenging curriculum and good personal relationships between teachers and their pupils. Only by consistent efforts would the school be able to maintain effective working conditions. Every teacher must bear an equal responsibility. Perhaps for this reason, one or two schools, when offered a behavioural/sanctuary unit by the education authority, preferred to use the resources available in a more general way, see School A, Chapter 4. Others accepted the offer in order to meet exceptional cases of personal stress and disruptive behaviour only, and attempted to avoid creating 'sin bins' by stringent

admission procedures. At least one school, after three years trial, was seriously considering closing its unit for lack of appropriate referrals.*

Procedures for serious offences

For really serious offences most schools summoned the pupil's parents for joint discussion. Some schools invoked 'temporary suspension' to precipitate such action and to ensure a few days respite for 'cooling off' on all sides. In most cases the schools were following procedures laid down by the LEA or in the school's Articles of Government. There were, however, sometimes unexpected repercussions. One school reported that on one occasion they had asked a pupil's father to come up to the school to discuss his son: the father arrived, fresh from administering a sound thrashing to the son, although he had had no prior indication of what the school wanted to discuss. The incident well illustrated the dangers of limiting parental participation to crises and behavioural problems. In his bulletin for parents, one headmaster wrote, "We believe that parents should be involved at all times. Too often in a traditional system parents were seen only when their child was reprimanded". Long term suspension was rare in the schools visited, and the extra length arose usually because of the need for time to find the right solution for the child's problems rather than from any wish to use it as a punishment. In most authorities, it involved definite procedures ensuring that the school governors were officially informed of such action as well as the education authority. To consider these more serious problems, case conferences were usually held; these might include the head, the educational psychologist, a representative of the child guidance centre, the education welfare officer, and any social workers involved with the pupil. Final exclusion was rarer still, even in schools with acute social and behavioural problems. Examples were given of neighbouring schools taking in such children, enabling staff and pupils to have a fresh start. If this failed, it remained the responsibility of the local authority to make alternative provision whether by means of home tuition or in a unit set up for the purpose.

A fuller discussion of behavioural units will be found in the repor: of a survey of such units. Behavioural Units, Department of Education and Science, December, 1978.

Most of the schools considered that in extreme cases their power to suspend was necessary for the maintenance of an orderly and well conducted school. It appeared to HM Inspectors that the existence of clear, written procedures covering suspensions of all kinds was an important element in the disciplinary framework.

6 The schools and the community

Home and community links

It has long been recognised that a child's education is a shared enterprise, involving parents, teachers and sometimes a number of other adults as well. Positive cooperation between these people is obviously desirable throughout the child's school life. The nature of this cooperation will of course change as the child grows older and according to the personal circumstances of those concerned. There is no universal prescription for building effective home-school relationships. It is more a question of seizing when they arise opportunities to carry out certain basic intentions. Examples of ways in which HMI found these relationships developing are summarised below. Most parental contacts with secondary schools were made when parents visited the school, usually by invitation. Some of these contacts resulted in strong personal links between parents and individual teachers. Joint activities were frequently undertaken with parent/teacher associations. In some schools, a few well disposed parents contributed voluntary help, for example in the library, in resource areas, or with games after school. These contacts eased the strains of more formal occasions such as the attendance at careers interviews and the traditional 'parents' evening' to discuss with individual teachers the child's progress. In recent years many of these meetings had become more relaxed, and geared to and timed to meet the convenience of parents who worked. Parents' evenings were often based on a flexible appointment system and when necessary parents were encouraged to seek out the housemaster or head of year direct. In the junior annexe of one school this had become a real feature of school life, and a senior teacher had been given a flexible timetable of team teaching and remedial work so that he did not have to leave a class unattended to meet a parent. In some cases personal contacts with parents had become so good that in times of trouble they turned to the school for help for the children or for themselves. The school then found it had become a referral agency.

Out-of-school activities for pupils, their families, and the wider community varied according to the area; some activities for pupils were adversely affected by the need to catch the school bus at the end of the

afternoon, but most schools made some provision, particularly in the field of physical education. A swimming bath was a great asset and was sometimes shared with the wider community. Some schools served as evening institutes but, except in the case of one community college, there seemed little attempt to link the day and evening provision. One school, with no additional facilities, had launched its own small community project, making available craft and PE areas in the evenings, manned by staff volunteers. In this school English classes were set up for newly arrived non-English-speaking adults. In a community college which had made a positive attempt to link school and adult provision, a creche was set up to care for the young children of mothers who attended classes during the daytime. Another school ran youth clubs for year groups as an extension of its tutorial provision.

Communication with parents

Many of the schools were constantly attempting to improve communication with parents. End of term reports and formal 'letters home' were supplemented with lively 'bulletins' of news once or twice a term; they included such items as sports triumphs, school visits, children's individual successes, invitations to social events, announcements about sales of secondhand uniforms and evening activities, including classes for parents. Two of the schools in the survey had sections of their bulletins in Gujerati for those not yet able to read English. Most schools also produced a formal prospectus giving details of dress, buildings and curricular provision for the newcomer. They were a useful means of introducing the school, as well as of carrying information, particularly about options and examinations. The tone of these papers was friendly and encouraging, inviting parents' comment and cooperation. They also gave parents some basis on which to judge the schools, both in prospect and from subsequent experience.

Home visiting

Teachers in the schools visited were divided over the desirability of visiting children informally in their own homes. A trained counsellor in one school was convinced that the parents on the slum clearance estate would definitely object to such visits unless made for a very specific purpose. In other

areas, the cultural differences between various ethnic groups could also cause difficulties for the well-intentioned but uninformed visitor. Some teachers felt that such visiting should depend on an invitation coming from the home in the first place and that having been given it should not be refused. Some people were better at visiting than others and some might be obviously qualified for it by their status in the school (eg counsellor, head of year, deputy head). In some schools, form tutors were expected to make regular home visits. Since many form tutors were young and inexperienced, one headmaster devoted a section of his staff handbook to guidance on the conduct of such visits. Central to this advice was his comment, "It is important to stress that we go into parents' homes at their invitation. If a family does not wish to be visited there must be no question of our insisting...". In one school the tutor could ask the head of year to accompany him on a home visit. Many teachers who believed in home visiting felt that great care was necessary to make it clear to parents that the principal aim in home visiting was to establish personal contact with them so that if consultation were needed in the future, perhaps about general welfare, school progress, or difficulties, it could be done within an established relationship. The teachers fully understood that care had to be taken not to obstruct the work of education welfare officers who already visited officially, or that of any other social worker who was involved with a family.

The general aim of such work with parents was to improve attitudes in order that traditional authoritarian atmospheres of 'them and us' could be tempered by personal knowledge. For example, if the parents were invited to visit the school, even if this was because the child was in trouble, the school was no longer an anonymous authority but a group of people known to the parents. Such changed attitudes were one of the main educational aims of a community school. By making school facilities available to the general public, and fostering the relationships which resulted, it was hoped to make the school an integral part of its community in which all who used it had a stake. This might include hostile neighbours with no link with the school other than proximity.

Other social work agencies

In the schools visited the disruptive behaviour of some of the pupils was a concomitant of social disadvantage, and they and their families were the

concern of other social agencies as well. In these cases therefore the cooperation of social workers with the school was almost as crucial as that of parents. Any action taken without reference to the other workers involved might result in serious conflicts for the child. Many teachers were much concerned with methods of achieving effective cooperation. Case conferences and the personal meetings arising from them sometimes led to very good personal contacts between individuals at field level, but in many cases contact between teachers and social workers was restricted to occasions of crisis, no doubt because they both had heavy workloads and were not available at the same times. As a result it seemed that communication was often poor and coordination of activities lacking.

The obvious links were the education welfare officers. They were often involved in case conferences about children attending the school, and were required to be in touch with members of the school staff as well as with social workers. It was clear that the chief difficulty of the education welfare service in many areas was shortage of staff, and therefore of time, to deal with the volume of work generated by local needs. This was particularly true of inner city areas. The situation was not however uniformly difficult. In one small industrial town, the education welfare officer was reckoned to know everyone and would go straight out to a child as soon as his/her absence was notified; the school relied upon him as much as on senior pastoral staff for indications as to where help was needed but would probably not be sought.

In one school the education welfare officer was school-based—a great asset in dealing with absentees promptly. Some form tutors and heads of year made a practice of visiting homes with him when the need arose.

In another school each of the five heads of house met the education welfare officer and the educational psychologist on a rota basis once every five weeks. The same school had a termly meeting consisting of the headmaster, the juvenile magistrates, the divisional education officer, the district inspector (LEA), the education welfare officer, the educational psychologist, a member of the social services department, a school governor, and senior house staff. Thus there were small meetings at case work level and meetings of a larger group for broader discussion. A few other schools had similar arrangements for bringing associated workers together, but many schools lacked this kind of coordination.

In one or two instances, social workers were school based. The social services office was adjacent to one school and had allocated a school social worker who was responsible for home-school visiting, as well as for more routine work with the families. The same school spoke with warmth of a young persons' officer "who visits the same day" in cases of real crisis. In school A, a large comprehensive, as already described, the Area Health Authority, as a matter of policy, had established a nurse.

No detailed examination was made of relationships between the schools visited and the schools psychological service. There was however a general impression that in the disadvantaged areas, the educational psychologists, like the education welfare officer, were under considerable pressure by reason of the demand for their services. One school spoke appreciatively of the help of the service in connection with its on-site behavioural unit.

Cooperation with the police varied from one area to another, but in one area, one school welcomed the police liaison officers in to the extent of using them as lecturers on law to the sixth form, and for more general lessons in community studies elsewhere in the school. The two officers were accepted in the school as if they were members of staff, and it was said that since their arrival some two years ago there had been a dramatic drop in juvenile delinquency among pupils.

Similarly relations with the probation service differed from one place to another. One school reported difficulty in securing support for action over truancy, another welcomed the monthly visits of the school liaison officer of the probation service.

Coordinating the services

It was clear that much remained to be done to coordinate the work of schools and social agencies. Links between the services were often haphazard and there were few regular meetings programmed for consideration of policy. Some of the best served schools were those with long-established members of staff who 'knew everyone' in the area and were happy to work on that basis. This was not however a sound basis for long-term cooperation, and in many schools effective systems still had to be worked

out. One headmaster remarked that information from the social services about his pupils was slow in coming, and that cooperation usually took place only when crises arose.

7 The community of the school

It was not necessarily the large schools which had the greatest problems, but those which served large, amorphous areas. Of one very large school in a small industrial town, the education welfare officer remarked, "It is uplifting for these students to come here". The population there was said to be relatively static: the task very different from that of the school in a great city which had to meet the shifting 'cosmopolitanism' of the area.

The schools visited responded in different ways to their problems, and between them they illustrated several stages of development. There was one fairly new school, and several others were tackling problems new to them. Some were clearly emerging from a difficult period and were approaching their difficulties in new ways with some degree of success. Others had developed a philosophy and had gone a long way towards implementing it. Still others were experiencing difficulties following the departure of a dynamic member of staff in a crucial area of the work. Those which were well established were identifiable by a number of characteristics. One of these was their use of resources. Even when far from ideal, these were made to serve the central purpose of the school to the limit of their capacities, and sometimes in the process yielded unexpected assets.

Buildings

All periods of school architecture from 1902 onwards were represented in the buildings of the schools visited. Some schools suffered badly from vandalism and it was not always easy to account for variations between school and school. One school in the middle of an area in which vandalism of previously sound, inhabited houses and flats was on a massive scale was virtually unscathed in spite of its accessible site. In another school vandalism occurred mainly during evening use, despite the efforts of the caretaker who not only patrolled the premises at night with his dog but had his bedroom linked to a burglar alarm system. Day-to-day repairs were speedily carried out when reported to the local authority, so that the building consistently presented a spruce and attractive appearance. This was by no means the case in all the schools visited where complaints were

made of long delays in such matters. Well kept grounds and a clean, cheerful building depended to a large extent on the caretaker and his staff. In some instances new building materials were found not to stand up to the hard wear of normal use. The importance of buildings was stressed by one deputy head who said, "We are concerned with the messages that buildings and people carry. We encourage staff to display children's work as a matter of routine". Displays of pupils' work—not a regular feature in many secondary schools—added greatly to the attractive appearance of several of them, as did potted plants grown by the pupils and placed in large circulation areas and enclosed courtyards. Because the latter were in open areas, surveillance was easy but constant and these features conveyed a pleasant, civilised atmosphere despite much latent turmoil among some pupils.

The effect school buildings could have on pupil behaviour was illustrated in one school which had experienced outbreaks of 'surging' when large groups of girls stormed down a relatively narrow corridor, carrying all obstacles along with them. As a result closer supervision and control in breaks and lunch hours had had to be provided. In School B on the other hand with its broad open areas such behaviour did not arise. Since in this school these broad areas were also used for curricular purposes, staff supervision was planned to be discreet and constant, more of a presence than a control. In schools with a variety of day and evening community activities heads mentioned the beneficial effects of the presence of adults. Vandalism in such places was rare. Unauthorised exits by pupils were easy to check in one school because there was only a single entrance to the grounds, which was used by everyone, whereas another had more difficulties because it had many entrances. But it was not always a question of restricting pupils' departures; there was also the question of unauthorised entry. One school reported contending with the inroads of a local gang in the lunch break. Another school issued passes for leaving the building at lunchtime, to be signed by parents when pupils returned for the afternoon.

The difficulty of maintaining the security of property, both personal and belonging to the school, posed problems. One school had resorted to having a locked cloakroom and another was installing lockers for which pupils provided their own padlocks.

The school staff

The staff, both teaching and non-teaching, were a key resource. Staff ratios in the schools visited varied. In 12 of the 18 they were within the range of 1:14.6 to 1:17.6. The least generous was 1:19 and some were better than 1:14.6. Given a reasonably generous level of staffing, effective deployment often appeared to be more important than the simple numerical matter of staffing ratio. While school policies could be affected to some extent by the number of staff available, the way in which they were employed was more often a positive expression of the school's ethos.

Many disadvantaged children suffer from lack of contact with mature adults. In school they therefore need more personal attention to compensate for their retarded development. Thus, in some of the schools special efforts were made to reduce the size of classes: in one school fourth- and fifth-year options had been reduced in order to free staff to teach the first three years, and in another school with a staffing ratio of 1:15, teachers had voluntarily agreed to forgo some non-teaching time in order to permit smaller teaching groups.

Small is not automatically beautiful: some work is better done in large groups. Lead lessons, including the watching of films and television, can often be as effective with large groups, provided they are orderly, as with small ones. It is not impossible to plan these ahead for timetabling. It is in the detailed follow-up and reinforcement that personal attention is so important, and for this the teachers require preparation time.

What is less often recognised is the degree of strain which may be involved for teachers if they choose or are required over a long period to do more than the staffing ratio reasonably allows. A generous staffing ratio is not necessarily a guarantee against such pressure. Expectations rise with staffing and in one school with a ratio of 1:12 even very committed teachers had reservations about the increase of extra-mural duties, notably in home visiting. Carefully organised lessons also require planning time, and team teaching is impossible without opportunities for all those involved to meet for extended periods.

At present, everything depends on teachers' commitment and enthusiasm. On a number of occasions, HMI recorded the high degree of professional

skill and sense of duty shown by teachers, regardless of age, sex or status, when working to implement the central ideas described on pages 11 and 12 without stinting the personal effort involved. The high morale in such schools was striking. Young teachers spoke of demanding work as 'exciting'. Teams of teachers met in the holidays to plan work, regularly sat with pupils from the year group or house at lunch, took them away on a week's residential experience and mounted holiday projects for them and their families. Outside school hours many teachers, some still very young, visited parents in their homes or met them at school, either to discuss such professional matters as option and career choices and individuals' progress, or for more social gatherings such as dances and barbecues. Some mounted special adult courses, including English as a second language for mothers from ethnic minority groups. Such schools were exciting to visit. One young teacher said "I never want to leave this school": in others, staff changes were rare and happened only for obvious reasons such as promotion or maternity. The greater stability of staffing in the last year or two was regarded by many schools as an important factor in enabling them to cope with their problems. Many of the pupils, too, spoke appreciatively of their schools. Significantly, even the one or two who disrupted the system to the point where they were transferred to a special unit or to another school were reluctant to go, perhaps because belatedly they recognised the tolerance and forbearance with which they had hitherto been treated.

The pupils

In these schools the general bearing of pupils was cheerful and poised. In one, for example, classes could be left unattended, teachers could set work and talk to visitors, and the children responded in a mature and responsible manner. They knew themselves to be of account, whether as members of school council and committees, or, in the case of seniors, trusted to help younger pupils with their reading difficulties or to act as interpreters when the need arose. As a rule, social areas were the prerogative of senior pupils, only because the building lacked space for more than the fifth and sixth year provision, but at least one head regretted the lack of such accommodation for the fourth year, seeing it both as a civilising influence in itself and an answer to the aimless rough behaviour which occurred when pupils had nowhere much to go and little to do. Organisation and behaviour in

such areas was made the responsibility of the pupils concerned, a useful social experience in itself.

Leadership

The importance of the leadership given by the heads was manifest wherever a caring philosophy was seen to be matched with widespread good practice. They set an example in professionalism, consciously employing the management techniques essential for running a large institution. They delegated responsibility, defined staff roles, opened up and maintained channels of communication (both in and out of school), and provided enough direction and support to give all the individuals involved a sense of security and responsibility. Above all, they were concerned to nourish a spirit of unity of purpose and endeavour. By establishing a few simple but basic principles (see pages 11 and 12) they created an ethos on which to base practical policies and effective deployment of all the resources available. The processes by which they carried the staff with them included consultation at all levels, both with groups and with individuals. This involved a mixture of patient listening, discussion and persuasion, and sometimes sheer force of personality in keeping in view the purposes to be achieved. It was a never-ending process since no human problem was ever totally solved, and the head's task was to move the team from one stage, more or less achieved, to the next. Difficult decisions were sometimes required, for example on such major and emotive issues as the abandonment of corporal punishment, in which a head might run the risk of losing the support of a valuable member of staff. Such situations undoubtedly accounted for some apparent inconsistencies in one or two schools.

These and other management processes were taxing and time consuming and could justifiably take up the whole of a head's time. Some heads, however, expressed disquiet that their own teaching expertise and that of their senior colleagues was not being used enough. One insisted on teaching for a quarter of the week, specialising in taking the most difficult groups. The rest of the senior management team were also expected to undertake regular teaching, unless their role required them to be immediately available to meet parents and other visitors, in which case they involved themselves wherever possible in team-teaching sessions.

Such heads held the balance between idealism and realism. There was mutual respect between them and their staffs and pupils. They did not demand the impossible but they did set and expect high standards. They encouraged staff and pupils by warm recognition of achievement, but made it clear that they did not overlook shortcomings. Even in large schools, on split sites, their presence was felt everywhere. Under their leadership even a split site became an asset.

8 Conclusion

Members of the visiting team of HMI wish to express to all the heads and staffs of the schools visited their warm appreciation of the help so generously given during the course of the survey, and to acknowledge the co-operation of the local education authorities who helped to decide which schools should be visited.

It was clear during the visits that these schools are facing a wide range of problems and a great diversity of tasks, and that their efforts and achievements are worthy of respect. They would be the first to claim that there can be no recipes for universal success, given the variations in the circumstances of schools and the intractability of some of the problems.

There was much evidence however that the schools were consciously applying certain principles to their work. An indication of the nature of these principles was given on pages 11 and 12; and in the Appendix, courses of action are suggested which teachers who are attempting to apply the principles in other schools may find useful. There is nothing new about these principles, but for those schools which have yet to consider them, there may be new insights to be gained and, with perseverance and consistency, the possibility of new and more positive responses from some at least of the pupils who have difficulties. To apply these principles in any thorough-going way requires hard work from teachers, and above all a concern in schools for the welfare of pupils, which shows itself in the care provided for them.

This is not a task with which schools can cope unaided: they need, and should be ready to seek and to accept, help and support not only from the specialist services but also from the community which they serve.

Appendix

The following is a list of issues to which it is suggested that schools and teachers seeking to reconsider their practice should address themselves. No such list can be exhaustive. There is no implication that it is only schools which may need to review their practice. For example, questions may arise about the sufficiency of the number of education welfare officers (or as they are sometimes called, social workers in education) employed, and their need for training, and it is for Local Education Authorities to consider such questions in the context of priorities for the use of available resources.

With these limitations in mind, it is suggested that any attack on behavioural problems has to be concerned with the following:

THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING

A recognition that 'good teaching' is a major element in helping children with problems and in making schools attractive to pupils.

Insistence on high standards of work and effort from pupils, and consistency in making demands upon them.

The development of sympathetic understanding of the problems which some pupils face, including the recognition that some unacceptable behaviour is a response to unfavourable circumstances in the pupil's environment.

Study and training to increase understanding of the nature of pupils' behaviour problems and to find ways of helping them.

THE CURRICULUM

Careful planning of the curriculum to provide balance in meeting social as well as educational needs, with particular attention to:

Transition from primary to secondary education, and from year to year in the secondary school.

The problems of special groups—slow learners and other pupils of limited ability, pupils with learning difficulties who will respond if special help is given, pupils who are disturbed or otherwise handicapped.

The special requirements of children in ethnic minority groups, including their language needs which may be particularly difficult to meet in socially deprived areas where general levels of language development are impoverished.

The achievement of literacy because of its central position in personal development and in social living.

The relevance of the curriculum for older pupils to adult life and work.

ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT

Consideration of the school as a social structure, in order to ensure that it demonstrates that all pupils are equally valued, and that their needs are recognised to be of equal importance.

The provision of strong and supportive leadership, in order that purposes and approaches, settled in a consultative way, are well understood by all the staff, and that teachers work as members of a team. Teachers need to be mutually supportive.

A study of the needs of the special groups mentioned above, to see that the organisation enables those needs to be met. Special help will be required to allow and promote the reintegration into the school of pupils who have been away, for example in community homes.

Planning to encourage the development of a spirit of cooperation between pupils and teachers, both informally in the classroom, and formally in the arrangements for consultation and discussion.

The organisation of the pastoral role and the teaching role as complementary aspects of the educational task.

Making effective arrangements with social and other relevant services for coordinated working.

Limiting school rules to those which are necessary and simple, in recognition of the need to develop in pupils an increased feeling of responsibility for their own conduct.

The maintenance of effective attendance records, designed to give speedy information about non-attendance both at whole sessions, and at individual lessons; and pursuing energetically and consistently measures to improve attendance.

The provision of opportunities for staff development and training, eg within the school by means of staff conferences to help teachers to understand the problems and needs of their pupils.

DISCIPLINE

Aiming to provide a regime based on reason and communal needs, which can be firm yet humane, in which consistency can be tempered with flexibility, and in which pupils are led to an understanding of consequences.

The encouragement of pupils to feel that they are full members of the school community.

Ensuring that every pupil has at least one teacher who knows him well and regularly has time to talk over his progress with him.

The development of mutual respect between pupils and teachers, with all members of staff setting a consistent and stable example.

Using imagination and enterprise in engaging the interest of parents in the education of their children, with particular attention to those parents who have not visited the school.

The maintenance of a clear structure of responsibility with a well defined course of action, and ensuring that this is known to all members of the staff.

A review of the nature of the sanctions which are used in cases of misbehaviour or breaches of rules, to ensure that they continue to be appropriate. This applies particularly to the use of corporal punishment: in most of the schools visited it had either been abolished or was declining.

The establishment of clear written procedures for suspensions of all kinds dealing with such subjects as who is to be informed, whose job it is to see the parents, and what is the role of governors.

Encouragement by every possible means of the establishment in the school of a tradition of hard work in the pursuit of high standards, which itself is a discipline and a therapy for pupils and staff alike.

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